

EVENTS-COLD WAR EXPLANATIONS

Apartheid— which means "separateness"—had seemed almost unassailable. A white minority had both dominated and segregated blacks and other nonwhites since the Dutch and British settled what is now South Africa in the late 1600s and 1700s.

But apartheid took an especially pernicious form in 1950 when the ruling Afrikaners, descendants of the original Dutch settlers, began passing laws forcing blacks and coloureds (people of mixed race) to live and work in restricted areas, and barred them from owning land outside those areas.

Nonwhites soon found themselves prisoners in their own land. They were educated only enough to perform basic labor in white-run industries. They could not socialize with whites, have a voice in government, or even travel outside their designated areas without government approval. All blacks—who made up 70 percent of the population—had to carry "pass books" that recorded their movements, and could be arrested for inviting whites to their homes without approval.

NAFTA

On January 1, 1994, the North American Free Trade Agreement between the United States, Canada, and Mexico (NAFTA) entered into force.

All remaining duties and quantitative restrictions were eliminated, as scheduled, on January 1, 2008.

NAFTA created the world's largest free trade area, which now links 450 million people producing \$17 trillion worth of goods and services.

Trade between the United States and its NAFTA partners has soared since the agreement entered into force.

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

Fifteen new countries became independent with the dissolution of the USSR in 1991. Most of these countries declared independence a few months preceding the fall of the Soviet Union in late 1991.

- . [Armenia](#)
- . [Azerbaijan](#)
- . [Belarus](#)
- . [Estonia](#)
- . [Georgia](#)
- . [Kazakhstan](#)
- . [Kyrgyzstan](#)
- . [Latvia](#)
- . [Lithuania](#)
- . [Moldova](#)
- . [Russia](#)
- . [Tajikistan](#)
- . [Turkmenistan](#)
- . [Ukraine](#)
- . [Uzbekistan](#)

Former Yugoslavia

Yugoslavia dissolved in the early 1990s into five independent countries.

- . [Bosnia and Herzegovina](#), February 29, 1992
- . [Croatia](#), June 25, 1991
- . [Macedonia](#) (officially The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) declared independence on September 8, 1991 but wasn't recognized by the United Nations until 1993 and the United States and Russia in February of 1994
- 0. [Serbia and Montenegro](#), (also known as the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia), April 17, 1992 (see below for separate Serbia and Montenegro entries)
- . [Slovenia](#), June 25, 1991

October 3, 1990 - East Germany and West Germany merged to form a unified [Germany](#) after the fall of the Iron Curtain.

REUNIFICATION OF GERMANY

A strong drive for reunification developed in East and West Germany in 1990. In East Germany, conservative parties supporting reunification won the elections, and the new government and the force of events proceeded to dismantle the state. Economic union with the West occurred in July, and on Oct. 3, 1990, political reunification took place under what had been the West German constitution. In new national elections (Dec. 1990), the conservative coalition headed by Kohl retained power. The economy of the East largely collapsed, and the costs of reunification and the privatization of state-owned businesses in the East pushed Germany into recession and led to increased social tensions. By 1994, however, the economy had improved, and Kohl led his coalition to a narrow victory in national elections.

NATO Action in Yugoslavia

A brief war fought in 1999 between [NATO](#) and Serbia, the main remnant of the former [Yugoslavia](#), over the status of the Yugoslavian province of Kosovo. In 1998, Serbian president Slobodan [Milosevic](#) sent Serbian troops to take back areas of Kosovo controlled by ethnic Albanian guerrillas, triggering a [NATO](#) air campaign in 1999. The war ended when Serbia agreed to a peace agreement sponsored by the [United Nations](#).

The Kosovo War was NATO's first military engagement. It was controversial in part because NATO was not repelling an attack on member states but intervening in what was arguably an internal affair.

The Gulf War (2 August 1990 – 28 February 1991), codenamed **Operation Desert Storm** (17 January 1991 – 28 February 1991) was a war waged by a U.N.-authorized [Coalition force](#) from 34 nations led by the [United States](#), against [Iraq](#) in response to Iraq's [invasion and annexation of Kuwait](#).

The war is also known under [other names](#), such as the [Persian Gulf War](#), **First Gulf War**, **Gulf War I**, or the **First Iraq War**,^{[13][14][15]} before the term "[Iraq War](#)" became identified instead with the [2003 Iraq War](#) (also referred to in the U.S. as "Operation Iraqi Freedom").^[16] Kuwait's invasion by [Iraqi troops](#) that began 2 August 1990 was met with international condemnation, and brought immediate [economic sanctions against Iraq](#) by

members of the [U.N. Security Council](#). U.S. President [George H. W. Bush](#) deployed [U.S. forces](#) into [Saudi Arabia](#), and urged other countries to send their own forces to the scene. An array of nations joined the Coalition. The great majority of the Coalition's military forces were from the U.S., with Saudi Arabia, the United Kingdom and Egypt as leading contributors, in that order. Saudi Arabia paid around US\$36 billion of the US\$60 billion cost.[\[17\]](#)

The war was marked by the beginning of live news on the front lines of the fight, with the primacy of the U.S. network [CNN](#).[\[18\]\[19\]\[20\]](#) The war has also earned the nickname *Video Game War* after the daily broadcast images on board the U.S. [bombers](#) during Operation Desert Storm.[\[21\]\[22\]](#)

FULL DIPLOMATIC/ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH VIETNAM

On this day in 1994, President Bill Clinton lifted the U.S. trade embargo against Vietnam, some 19 years after the fall of Saigon to communist forces.

In making the move, Clinton cited Hanoi's cooperation in helping American forensic teams locate and, when possible, identify the 2,238 U.S. service personnel still listed as missing in the Vietnam War.

Despite the lifting of the embargo, Vietnamese exports remained subject to high tariffs pending the communist-led country's qualification as a "most favored nation." The White House said Vietnam needed to broaden its free-market reforms to qualify for that status.

In July 1995, Clinton established full diplomatic relations with Vietnam. In making that decision, Clinton said he had been advised by Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) a former naval pilot who spent five years as a prisoner of war in Hanoi.

For his part, McCain brushed aside criticism of Clinton's move in some conservative circles, declaring the time had come for America to normalize relations with its former enemy.

In November 2000, Clinton became the first president to visit Vietnam since Richard Nixon's 1969 trip to South Vietnam during the Vietnam War.